



Plant Employee Informer



KICK-OFF TO A NEW YEAR

...AND A NEW NAME!



SHOP TALK

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP...

These are just some of the sounds coming from the Gardener Shop break room every morning. In the beginning of the year 2002, the Gardener shop was selected as a pilot shop for the morning stretch program. Lois Halunen from Hazards Control, Chris Clegg and Rhona Balan from Health Services, came to the shop to help inaugurate the program. The three of them met with six selected individuals from our shop to help train us on the fine art of stretching. The training consisted of three separate meetings that lasted roughly an hour each. Once the training was complete the Gardener Shop was ready to implement the program.

It was decided that the first two weeks of the program would be mandatory for each member of the shop to attend. As qualified leaders of the program, we rotated instructors on a daily basis for the two week period. After the two week period was over, each member of the shop was given the option to continue with the program, or begin his workday on his own. Not one employee wanted to stop the program. And as it turns out, each member takes a random turn at leading the daily stretch. From a shop of twenty three personnel, we have maintained a 100 % participation rate for the entire eight months of the program. Our Superintendent, P.J. Lyra, even joins us when his busy schedule will allow.

The program even has some added benefits that were not anticipated prior to its inception. The camaraderie between all shop personnel has improved considerably. This in turn, has improved the communication between Supervisors and workers as well as co-workers. Therefore we have a better understanding of daily assignments and project management is more efficient.



Quotes from the Shop:

"I even use these stretches at home on my own"

"Great program, that actually promotes a psychological benefit as well as physical"

"It works, my wrist feels great"

"It's a motivator that makes me feel comfortable starting the work day"

"It's excellent, well received, 100% participation"

"I definitely feel more limber after the stretch"

"It's good and it has helped a lot"



The program subsequently acts as a "wake up" period for all to help kick start the day.

It is important to emphasize that this is a STRETCH program and not an exercise program. There was some reluctance at the beginning, because some thought it was an exercise

program with traditional "jumping jacks" and "sit up" type exercises. The individuals literally refused to be forced to exercise. However, once the program began and personnel were assured this was indeed stretching and not a cardiovascular workout, the reluctance subsided and guys began easing into the program.

The program emphasizes stretching the body from the neck down to the ankles. It includes stretches like, chin tucks, shoulder shrugs, wrist flexion, hamstring stretch, calf stretch, and even a seated back stretch. As opposed to strengthening muscle and improving cardiovascular endurance, this is a true stretching program. It concentrates on loosening up ligaments, tendons, and muscles. It prepares a person for the start of the work day. The Landscape Industry can be an extremely physically demanding job. From high tree pruning, soil excavation, small and heavy equipment operation, and long hours on ones feet, a good stretch is beneficial. A solid morning stretch program, that the guys can implement throughout the day, has helped our shop tremendously. Our Shop Safety record speaks for itself as well as the Morning Stretch program.

I strongly recommend any shop not participating in a stretch program, to contact Health Services and get one started. If you want to see our program in action, please stop by our shop at B531, Rm.1050, any morning between 6:30 and 6:45am. Please give me a call if you have any questions or comments. 3-0495.

Sincerely, Aaron Wanden
ESC Representative
Plant Engineering, Gardener Shop